



Easy to pack and perfect for that favorite dip, the crunchy texture and sweet taste of **carrots** make them popular among both adults and children. Locally grown Idaho **carrots** are in season from August through November

Carrots are an excellent source of antioxidant compounds, and the richest vegetable source of the Vitamin A. **Carrots'** antioxidant compounds help protect against cardiovascular disease and cancer and vitamin A promotes good vision, especially night vision.

When buying **carrots**, look for a bright orange-gold color and medium size. Smaller-sized **carrots** are usually sweeter and more tender. If the tops are attached, the leaves should be bright green and fresh looking. To remove **carrot** tops, twist or cut off the leaves before storing. Otherwise, the greens will soon wilt and decay and moisture will be drawn from the roots, turning the **carrot** limp and rubbery.



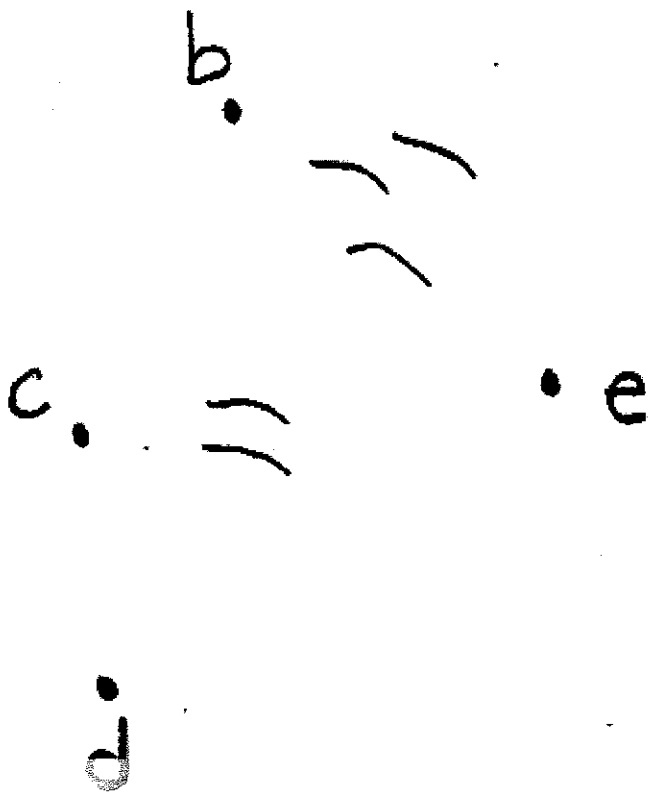
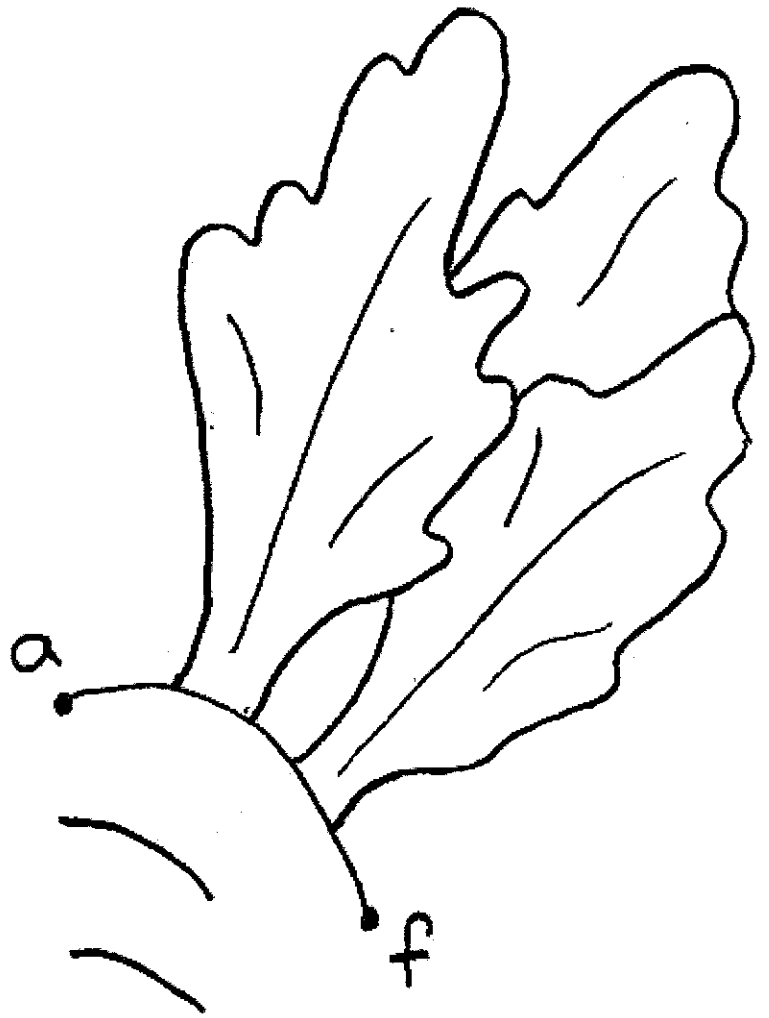
Carrots are great fresh as a snack or to add color and crunch to your salad. When cold weather arrives, try adding **carrots** to your favorite soup, stew or casserole to add color, fiber and nutrition!



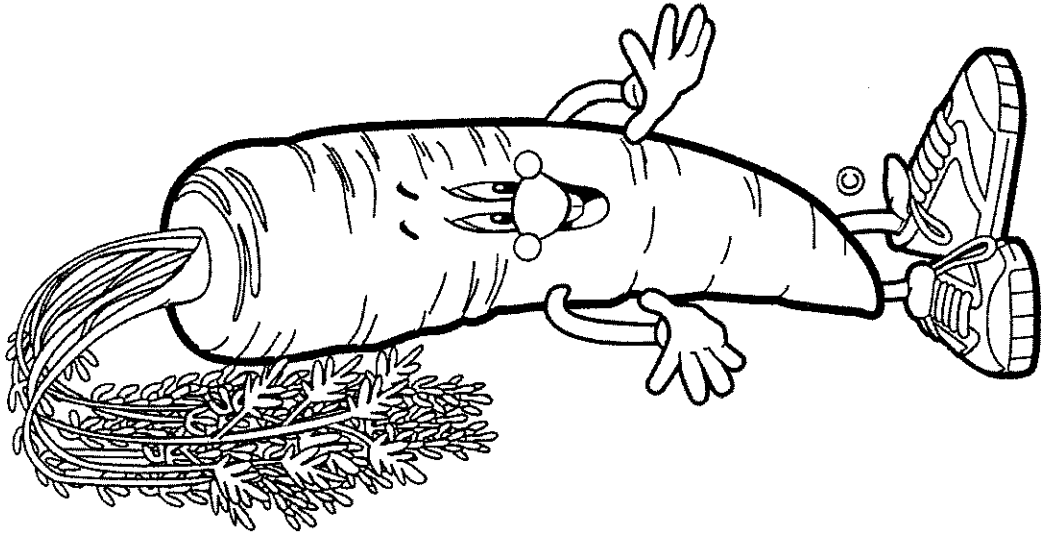
Curtis Carrot



Graphics by Mary Connors 2001



Fun Facts About Carrots



My name is Calvin Carrot.

Did you know that...?

- Carrots are a root vegetable.
- Carrots are a member of the Umbelliferae family, which also includes plants such as dill, fennel, parsley, parsnip, caraway and celery.
- The scientific name for carrots is *Daucus carota*.
- The first carrots grown by humans were purple and yellow!
- In the 15th century, English women wore lacy carrot leaves in their hair.
- Most people think all carrots are orange, but they can range in color from white to yellow to crimson!
- When carrots were first cultivated in Central Asia, the most common varieties were green and purple.
- The first carrots were not grown for food; they were to be used as medicine.
- California is the biggest carrot producing state in the U.S.
- California produces over 60 percent of the total U.S. carrot crop.
- Over 90 percent of carrots are sold fresh; the remainder are frozen or used in processed foods like soup or juice blends.
- Baby carrots are cut from large carrots.
- One medium carrot or eight baby carrots counts as one 5 A Day serving of vegetables.
- Carrots are rich in beta-carotene, a substance our bodies convert into vitamin A.
- The Spanish word for carrot is *zanahoria*.
- The French word for carrot is *carotte*.
- The Italian word for carrot is *la carota*.
- The German word for carrot is *Karotte*.

Carrots for Valuable Vitamin A

The carrot (*Daucus carota*) gets its name from the French word *carotte*, which in turn comes from the Latin *carota*. It has been known since ancient times and is believed to have originated in Afghanistan and adjacent areas.

A wide diversity of forms unknown in America is found in middle Asia and also in Asia Minor. Apparently some primitive forms were carried to Asia Minor far back in prehistoric times, and many distinct kinds were later developed there. Among the kinds strange to us in America are some with purplish-red roots, colored like garden beets, and some with fuzzy light-gray leaves.

Our common carrot is called the Mediterranean type, because it has long been known in Mediterranean countries and was probably developed there from kinds carried from Asia Minor. In the Far East is still another form, the Japanese carrot, that is commonly three feet long or more.

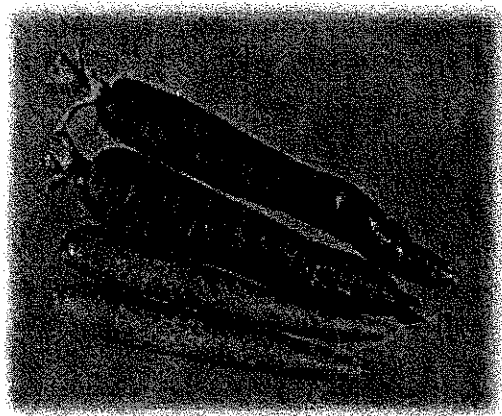
Mothers Say, "Eat Your Carrots, Junior"

As is true of a number of other vegetables, it seems that the first interest in carrots as food developed from their supposed medicinal value. Greek agriculturists and physicians around the first century of our era wrote of carrots and their value as a stomach tonic.

Are we amused now by the ancients' attaching such medical importance to the carrot? Why should we be? In America in the past 25 to 30 years the humble carrot has risen from an obscure root, considered mainly as a delicacy for horses, to a position of genuine importance as human food.

How did it happen? Our doctors and nutrition experts made us believe carrots are "good for us"; we know that varieties with a deep orange color are rich in carotene, or provitamin A, found also in other yellow vegetables and in green leaves. Vitamin A is found in such foods of animal origin as fish-liver oils, butter, and egg yolks.

Perhaps the ancient Greeks were the real discoverers of the benefit of carrots in the diet. However, they did not know the reasons and lacked the teaching facilities used to induce us to eat our carrots.



The carrot was certainly cultivated in the Mediterranean area before the Christian Era, but it was not important as a food until much later. There is a long gap of about 900 years between the writings of the Greeks and Romans of the first to third centuries and the next clear records about the carrot.

By the 13th century carrots were being grown in fields, orchards, gardens, and vineyards in Germany and France. At that time the plant was known also in China, where it was supposed to have come from Persia.

By the 16th century nearly all the botanists and writers on gardening, all over Europe, were familiar with the carrot and were describing many kinds, including red and purple kinds in France, yellow and red kinds in England. About 1600, in England, carrots were common enough to be grown as a farm crop as well as in small garden plots.

Carrots Arrived Before the Mayflower

European voyagers carried the carrot to America soon after discovery of the New World, as is shown by Sir John Hawkins's reference to it on Margarita Island, off the coast of Venezuela, in 1565. It was grown by the struggling colonists of the first permanent English settlement in the New World, at Jamestown, Virginia, in 1609. Twenty years later the Pilgrims, or some of those who followed them closely, were growing it in Massachusetts. The Pilgrims themselves may have introduced it there. Before the middle of the 17th century it was known in Brazil.

Even the American Indians rather promptly took up carrot culture. In forays against the Iroquois in upper New York State in 1779 Gen. John Sullivan's forces destroyed stores of carrots as well as parsnips. The story is told that children of the Flathead tribe in Oregon liked carrots so well that they could not resist stealing them from the fields, although they resisted stealing other things.

The carrots having spherical roots and tapering roots have long been known, but the cylindrical stump-rooted sorts are of rather recent development, first grown in America about 60 years ago.

All varieties of importance in this country are deep orange in color, although yellow and even white kinds are known. Some of the deep-colored varieties are erroneously referred to as "red." This error has even crept into the name of a currently popular variety, Red Cored Chantenay, which is a rich orange color, not red. It is interesting, however, that pure carotene, which makes carrots yellow or orange, appears red.

In addition to the large quantities marketed fresh, we now find carrots canned, and even frozen, especially in an attractive mixture with green garden peas. During the war many thousands of tons were dehydrated and shipped overseas in sealed metal containers in an atmosphere of carbon dioxide or nitrogen to prevent loss of carotene.